Structuring U.S. Ground Forces to Meet All Threats

A Monograph
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Abstract

Structuring U.S. Ground Forces to Meet All Threats by Major Jason A. Curl, U.S. Army, 49 Pages.

Potential adversaries of the United States have learned that they cannot compete with the U.S. in a conventional war but that the U.S. is vulnerable to asymmetric or insurgent threats. It is clear that the United States must find a way to transform its ground forces to meet these threats without losing the ability to deter any conventional threats. To this end, some leaders and analysts are calling for the United States military to break its ground forces in two; one focusing primarily on major combat operations and one focusing on stability and counterinsurgency operations. This study shows that two forces are not necessary. Instead, the military must develop tactical and operational commanders with the mental flexibility to adapt to any situation they face.

This study analyzes three cases where ground forces had to transition between these two forms of warfare. The first case study is the United States Army in the Indian Wars that conducted stability and counterinsurgency operations immediately after fighting major combat operations in the Civil War. The next is the British Army in the First World War that fought a conventional war after 58 years of stability counterinsurgency operations since the end of the Crimean War. The final case study is the British Army in Malaya that had to conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations immediately after fighting major combat operations in the Second World War.

The focus of this study is whether tactical and operational commanders have the mental flexibility to transition between these to two kinds of warfare. They are the ones who must train their forces, recognize the nature of their environments, and make timely decisions. Failures resulting from imprudent policy formation at the national strategic level or other external factors do not prove a need for two forces. A minority of tactical and operational commanders who could not initially recognize their changed environment but were able to quickly learn and adapt also does not prove a need for two forces. Only evidence of a majority of tactical and operational commanders who could not quickly recognize the changed nature of their environments and new requirements would prove the need for two forces.

In all three of the case studies, the tactical and operational commanders were able to effectively transition. There were major national strategic failures that inhibited the commanders' abilities to succeed and their own initial mistakes further complicated their situations. The telling thing, though, was that in all three case studies, the commanders were able to change their thinking, transform their forces, and make the critical decisions that led to victory. Their mental flexibility to transition between these forms of warfare was decisive for success. If they had not been able to make the mental transition, they could not have succeeded in these extremely difficult and complex operations.

After studying these cases, it is clear that splitting the force is not the answer; changing the culture and training of the United States ground forces is the answer. The key is developing adaptive leaders and soldiers with the cognitive skills necessary to quickly transition between any forms of warfare instead of developing narrowly focused technical skills. Leaders must develop a holistic approach to training that focuses on the similarities between these missions.

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Introduction

Recent operations have shown that United States adversaries cannot match U.S. firepower and maneuver technology in a conventional or symmetric war, but that the U.S. is vulnerable to asymmetric and insurgent threats[1]. It is clear that United States' ground forces must continue to transform to meet these threats but also must maintain the credibility necessary to deter any conventional threats. The question is whether the same ground force can effectively conduct conventional operations and counterinsurgency operations or if the U.S. needs to split its ground force for these two missions. This study demonstrates that two forces are not necessary. The three case studies show that tactical and operational commanders have been able to effectively transition between these two missions when they have embraced their mission and learned the correct lessons.

Imagine if in the spring of 2003, the United States could have toppled Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq as quickly as it did and then have immediately transitioned to stability and counterinsurgency operations with the same skill and expertise. The problem was that the United States Army had no plan to restore peace prior to seizing Baghdad and deposing the Iraqi government[2]. The newly released Army Field Manual on counterinsurgency operations says, "Initially, COIN (counterinsurgency) operations are similar to emergency first aid for the patient. The goal is to protect the population, break the insurgents' initiative and momentum, and set the conditions for further engagements[3]." Given this imperative, the United States missed a golden

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[1] Michael R. Melillo, "Outfitting a Big-War Military with Small War Capabilities," *Parameters* (Autumn 2006): 24.

[2] Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainer, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 502.

[3] *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency Operations.* (Washington: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2006), 5:2.

opportunity in the first month after defeating Saddam Hussein's regime because of its inability to comprehend the situation and take the initiative[4].

Those pushing for two forces often cite United States tactical and operational failures in the Vietnam War and immediately following major combat operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). In Vietnam, body-count metrics, defoliation, and disinclination to secure the populace actually pushed the people of South Vietnam into the hands of the Viet Cong[5]. Again in Iraq, the U.S. went in with a heavy-handed approach, cultivated by its conventional war preoccupation, seriously undermining any attempt to win the decisive support of the Iraqi population[6]. They failed to determine their desired outcomes and what political and military resources would best achieve them[7].

While the United States military must learn these lessons and adjust its training and doctrine appropriately, it still faces potential conventional threats. Larry Wortzel, Director of the Asian Studies Center at the Heritage Foundation, says that although there is no reason to believe that China will become a major conventional competitor akin to the former Soviet Union:

> China's policies on nuclear proliferation – the supplying of missiles, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the technology to make them such deadly instruments of war to dangerous rogue states that support terrorism – threaten U.S. national security and our vital foreign policy interests. China's 20-plus nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles threaten the United States. And China's threats against Taiwan could embroil the U.S. forces in a military conflict.[8]

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[4] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco.* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 151.

[5] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 213.

[6] Gordon and Trainor, 495.

[7] Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force.* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 395.

[8] Larry M. Wortzel and Lawrence J. Korb, "Symposium: Q: Is China's Rapid Military Build-up Threatening U.S. Interests in East Asia?" *Insight on the News* 18, no. 28 (Aug 5, 2002): 40.

Also, Russia is using the current U.S. situation in Iraq as an opportunity to reestablish its influence throughout the former Soviet Union, including with Georgia and other U.S. allies[9]. Finally, the U.S. must be ready to face terrorist or extremist groups that transition to conventional military operations, as Hezbollah did in their 2006 war against Israel[10].

In their 2006 war against Hezbollah, Israel showed the dangers of transforming too far and losing the ability to fight a conventional enemy. Beginning in 2000, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) transformed into a cellular, communications based counterinsurgency force designed to defeat their Palestinian terrorist threat[11]. By 2006, the IDF excelled at the basic counterinsurgency tasks of cordoning and searching, conducting raids, and identifying and capturing Palestinian guerillas[12]. The problem was that they lost the ability to conduct basic battle drills, coordinate operations above the company level, or employ fire support[13]. Most germane to this study, Israeli operational level commanders lost the ability to recognize the nature of the Hezbollah threat and develop a coherent campaign plan to defeat a semi-conventional opponent. Their over-reliance on air-power and reluctance to attack with the appropriate number of ground forces prevented them from defeating the Hezbollah forces[14].

Because of examples like these, many experts are calling for the United States to develop two different ground forces, one for large conventional wars and one for counterinsurgency and stability operations. On 10 Oct 07 Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said that the United States

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[9] George Friedman, "Red October: Russia, Iran, and Iraq," *Stratfor*, entry posted on September 17, 2007, http://www.stratfor.com/products/premium/read_article.php (accessed September 18, 2007).

[10] B.C. Kessner, "Time Will Tell, or Quell Defense Doubts Looming from Lebanon Crisis," *Defense Daily International* 7, no.7 (Aug 11, 2006): 2.

[11] Ibid., 1.

[12] Daniel Helmer, "Not Quite Counterinsurgency: A Cautionary Tale for U.S. Forces Based on Israel's Operation Change of Direction," *Armor* 116, no.1 (Jan/Feb 2007): 8.

[13] Ibid., 10.

[14] Efraim Inbar, "How Israel Bungled the Second Lebanon War," *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2007, http://www.meforum.org/article/1686 (accessed August 22, 2007).

must be better prepared to meet its non-traditional threats. One of the things that he is considering is dedicating certain divisions to stability operations and training foreign militaries[15]. Also, in the book, *The Pentagon's New Map,* Thomas Barnett says that the U.S. needs two different forces, a leviathan force for the major conventional operations and a system administrator force for stability operations. He opines that 19 year old kids cannot make the necessary transition and neither can operational commanders[16].

This study analyzes three cases where ground forces had to make this transition and did so with varying results. Specifically, it investigates the United States Army in the Indian Wars that conducted stability and counterinsurgency operations immediately after fighting major combat operations in the Civil War, the British Army in the First World War that had to fight a conventional war after 58 years of stability and counterinsurgency operations since the end of the Crimean War, and the British Army in Malaya that had to conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations when its commanders were most experienced in major combat operations from the Second World War. The value of these particular cases is that they were all ultimately successful but the transitions between these two kinds of warfare caused challenges, frustrations, and learning. The U.S. Army in the Philippines, the Soviets in Afghanistan or the Caucasus, or the British in World War II, as well as a number of others, would be appropriate but the scope of this study required limiting the number of case studies.

The focus of this study is whether tactical and operational commanders have the mental flexibility to transition between these two kinds of warfare. They are the ones who need to be able train their forces, recognize the nature of their environments, and make timely decisions. Failures resulting from imprudent policy formation at the national strategic level or other external

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[15] Peter Spiegel and Julian E. Barnes, "Some Call For Many Specialized Units to Train Foreign Forces; Others Say Generalist Approach Works Best," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 2007.

[16] Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*. (New York: J.P. Putnam's and Sons, 2004), 302.

factors do not prove a need for two forces. A minority of tactical and operational commanders who could not initially recognize their changed environment but were able to quickly learn and adapt also does not prove a need for two forces. Only evidence of a majority of tactical and operational commanders who could not quickly recognize the changed nature of their environments and new requirements would prove the need for two forces.

This study shows that the tactical and operational commanders were able to make the transition effectively. In all three cases, there were major national strategic failures that inhibited the commanders' abilities to succeed and their own initial mistakes further complicated their situations. The telling thing, though, was that in all three case studies, the commanders were able to change their thinking, transform their forces, and make the critical decisions that led to victory. Their mental flexibility to transition between these forms of warfare was decisive for success. If they had not been able to make the mental transition, they could not have succeeded in these extremely difficult and complex operations.

The United States ground forces were uniquely unprepared for the missions in Vietnam and Iraq because of the military's organizational culture. Despite directives from President Kennedy to develop counterinsurgency skills in the early 1960's, the classroom education, field training, and doctrine revisions all focused on conventional kinetic approaches to counterinsurgency instead of a holistic approach to learning the skills that past counterinsurgent forces found successful[17]. This approach was born out of a culture that valued conventional, quick-decision wars of annihilation and not protracted counterinsurgency wars[18]. The Army's mind-set in the late 1970's and early 80's of "no more Vietnams", prevented the military from

[17] Krepinevich, 47.

[18] Ibid., 44.

learning the lessons that would have been helpful in Iraq and Afghanistan[19]. Military analyst, Frank Hoffman said, "American forces have a culture that seeks to ignore the requirements and challenges of irregular warfare, resulting in a requirement to relearn appropriate techniques with each new experience with this phenomenon[20]."

Based on this evidence, splitting the force is not the answer; changing the culture and training is the answer. Unless the culture changes, Barnett's system administrator force will be undertrained, underfunded, and largely ineffective while his leviathan force will take full advantage of funding and technological advances to become more dominant than ever. The key to ensuring that this force is prepared for any mission is developing a holistic approach to training that focuses on the similarities between these missions, rather than on specific technical skills.

Case Study 1: Indian Wars

During the Indian Wars, from 1865 until 1891, many of the same tactical and operational commanders who fought a conventional enemy in the United States Civil War proved that they could adapt to unconventional warfare. These conventionally trained commanders were successful because they learned the Indians' culture, developed diplomatic skills, dispersed their forces among the population, and used friendly natives and frontiersmen who better understood the environment. Although many failures led to great atrocities on both sides, most were caused by policies at the national strategic level and other external factors. The majority of tactical and operational failures in the Indian Wars came before the end of the Civil War when the regular forces moved west. Although there were many significant failures by tactical and operational commanders, the ability of these commanders to learn from these mistakes and adapt to their new environment allowed the United States to achieve a peaceful end to the wars. The commanders'

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[19] Robert M. Cassidy, "Back to the Street Without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 74.

[20] Melillo, 23.

abilities to transition from policies of retribution and living in large forts to negotiation, use of native scouts, and living among the population proved especially decisive to their success. Although much of this evidence comes from personal memoirs that show some bias, their thought processes about how to conduct successful counterinsurgent operations clearly stands out.

Some of the factors external to the purview of tactical and operational commanders that led to increased hostilities were U.S. settlers moving west in the 1840's and 50's, hunting the buffalo that the Indians needed for survival, and taking more and more Indian land. By 1862, the Indians were so fed up with white men taking their land and food that they began attacking villages and stage-coaches[21]. After the Civil War, the U.S. started building the Pacific railroad which took away even more of the Indians' land and added to their frustration. The Indians began attacking families along the train routes in western Kansas and Colorado and from Arkansas to New Mexico[22]. U.S. government's lack of inclination to uphold treaties, such as the Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1868, added to Indian frustration and hostilities[23]. The Medicine Lodge Treaty stipulated that the U.S. government would improve the reservations, enabling the Indians to live peacefully and comfortably but it soon became clear that the American government had no intention of upholding its end of the bargain. This made the Indians even more defiant[24].

In addition to their land and food losses, many Indian hostilities resulted from tyrannical treatment by the western militias before the end of the Civil War. These militia forces could not

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[21] W.J.D. Kennedy, *On the Plains with Custer and Hancock: The Journal of Isaac Coats, Army Surgeon.* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1997), 8.

[22] Phillip H. Sheridan, *The Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan.* (New York: De Capo Press, 1888), 445-6.

[23] Fairfax Downey, *Indian-Fighting Army.* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941): 35.

[24] Sheridan, 447.

distinguish between friendly and hostile Indians so they either punished everybody or nobody[25]. In 1864, militias began killing all Indians, friendly or enemy, causing Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Sioux warriors to increase their retaliation raids. Major Edward Wynkoop and Kansas Governor John Evans made a peace treaty with the Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Sioux chiefs only to have those efforts destroyed by the militia atrocities. In response to the Indian attacks that started in 1862, Brigadier General Patrick Connor and Colonel John Chivington ordered troops to kill all males over the age of 12 on a Cheyenne village in southeastern Colorado, in the Sand Creek Massacre[26]. These practices led to an extremely complex set of problems that the Regular Army commanders inherited when they moved west.

In addition to counterproductive practices in the West, poor government policies and civil unrest back East made it even more difficult for commanders to succeed in the Indian Wars[27]. First, the government cut the Army from over 1 million soldiers to 54,000 in the first two years after the Civil War[28]. This huge cut to the military's strength meant that the average company only had between five and twenty-five soldiers and could not provide the necessary security for western settlers[29]. Second, humanitarian groups in the East protested military operations in the West, making funding and recruiting for the Indian Wars extremely difficult[30]. Third, the government gave hostile Indians weapons as a peace concession which they used against U.S. soldiers[31]. The result was that the soldiers fighting the Indian Wars experienced great privation,

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[25] Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian; 1866-1891.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 55.

[26] Kennedy, 9-11.

[27] William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman.* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 784.

[28] Ibid, 761.

[29] Utley, 16; Kennedy, 18.

[30] Kennedy, 15.

[31] George A. Custer, *My Life on the Plains or Personal Experiences with Indians.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 33.

loneliness, and danger with very little acknowledgement or support from U.S. citizens. This seriously degraded their morale and combat effectiveness[32].

Also, the rift between the civilian Indian Bureau and the military produced many challenges for commanders[33]. In 1869, Congress determined that political appointees should make up the Indian Bureau instead of the commanders who had been working in the environment and building relationships[34]. This was a clear violation of the unity of command principle and limited commanders' abilities to make timely decisions necessary for the war. Generals William Sherman and Phillip Sheridan both had constant disputes with the Indian Bureau often preventing peace solutions[35].

Although most of the failures in the Indian Wars resulted from national strategic policies, regular Army commanders did have difficulties at first, caused by their initial ignorance of the war and enemy they were fighting. General Winfield Scott Hancock helped intensify the conflict when he followed up an ultimatum to the Arapaho and Cheyenne by burning an Indian village on the Pawnee Fork. Hancock wanted to punish the Indians and make it clear to them that attacking settlers would be too painful for them to continue. This showed his lack of understanding of their warrior spirit[36]. In 1867, Sherman made comments about exterminating the Indians, thereby motivating more attacks against white settlers[37]. Also, Sheridan's early refusals to meet with Indian chiefs and hear their complaints made them more aggravated and increased the danger for settlers. Finally in 1868, Sheridan made a peace settlement with the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Sioux only to have them use the perceived peace as an opportunity for unimpeded murdering and

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[32] Custer, 25.

[33] Kennedy, 15.

[34] Sherman, 783.

[35] Kennedy, 18.

[36] Ibid., 104.

[37] Ibid., 18.

pillaging[38]. This was the point when leaders began to learn and recognize that their environment had changed and that they needed to adapt their operations accordingly.

Sherman determined from his study of the British Army in India that the Army could not fight the Indian Wars from large forts located far away from the hostile forces[39]. They needed smaller forts in the middle of the hostile forces to prevent their attacks and secure the settlers. If soldiers were in the larger forts away from the hostile Indians, they would not be able to react to attacks before the perpetrators escaped[40]. This showed Sherman's appreciation for counterinsurgency warfare in 1867.

Although his campaign was not ultimately successful, General Hancock also showed that he was learning and adapting toward the end of his 1867 campaign. After the initial village burning blunder, Hancock shifted his focus from punishment to understanding, restraint, and diplomacy. Hancock recognized that he could make great headway with a November 1868 meeting with chiefs at Pawnee Fork although his impatience eventually led to failed negotiations[41]. Two days later, Hancock demonstrated that he was finally learning his new environment when his forces ran into warriors led by Chiefs Roman Nose, Bull Bear, and White Horse and battle lines were drawn. He diffused the situation by riding forward and talking with the Indian chiefs[42]. This was the beginning of a learning process that Sheridan adopted and took into his 1868 campaign.

Sheridan's 1868 campaign showed that Army leaders were learning Indian culture and practices and incorporating them into their planning. After the Indians breeched the August 1868 treaty, Sheridan planned an offensive to gain control of the hostile tribes. He restricted operations

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[38] Sheridan, 447-9.

[39] Utley, 46.

[40] Sherman, 761.

[41] Custer, 30.

[42] Ibid., 34.

during the grazing and hunting seasons, and then attacked relentlessly in the winter when the Indians' horses were weak and movement was impeded. He also made up for insufficient troop strength by enlisting Kansas volunteers and Indian scouts[43]. These forces proved invaluable because they had a much better appreciation for the terrain and hostile Indian forces[44].

This winter campaign successfully enticed the majority of the Kiowa, Comanche, and Arapaho to move to the reservations. Better living conditions at the reservations and battle losses caused by degraded fighting ability in the winter, compelled the majority to acquiesce[45]. Despite these major successes, a few tribes escaped and continued to attack white settlers through the winter of 1869[46]. Sheridan sent General George Custer with a small detachment of Indian scouts to find, meet with, and compel the remaining tribes to move to the reservation[47].

Custer's ability to use native forces to bring the rest of the Arapaho and Cheyenne to the reservation showed the diplomatic ability that is vital to unconventional warfare. Custer took 40 soldiers and Chiefs Little Robe and Yellow Bear to broker a peace settlement. After two days of travel, Custer and Yellow Bear met with Chief Little Raven and compelled him to move the remaining Arapaho back to the improved conditions at the reservation[48].

While Yellow Bear stayed with the Arapaho and helped them moved to the reservation, Custer, Little Robe, and the 40 soldiers tracked the Cheyenne. Once they located the tribe, Little Robe went forward and met with the Cheyenne chief, and then sent a smoke signal for the rest to come[49]. After their arrival, Custer explained to the leaders that they needed to move to the

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[43] Sheridan, 452-3.

[44] Utley, 53.

[45] Sherman, 783.

[46] Sheridan, 464.

[47] Ibid., 474.

[48] Custer, 317-28.

[49] Ibid., 332.

reservation. With this, the tribe got up and rushed out. Custer's men, showing amazing restrain, did not shoot but managed to capture four detainees. Custer's men treated the detainees very well but would not release them until the Cheyenne released the two white girls that they were holding and moved to the reservation. In the end, Custer's diplomacy, benevolent treatment of prisoners, and coercion compelled the remaining Cheyenne to submit and move to the reservation[50].

This diplomacy, patience, and ability to adapt to a new environment proved to be the turning point in the Indian Wars[51]. Custer's men thought that he was crazy for preventing them from shooting the escaping Cheyenne but later acknowledged that restraint was critical to achieving their objective[52]. After that, there were more attacks and battles but the overall outcome was settled. Sherman said of that point:

> There have been wars and conflicts with these Indians up to a recent period too numerous and complicated in their detail for me to unravel and record, but they have been the dying struggles of a singular race of brave men fighting against destiny, each less and less violent, till now the wild game is gone, the whites too numerous and powerful; so that the Indian question has become one of sentiment and charity, but not of war.[53]

In the struggles that did follow, conventionally trained Civil War generals like Oliver Howard showed that they understood the importance of diplomacy in unconventional warfare. In 1872, President U.S. Grant sent Howard to Arizona to meet with Chief Cochise, whose Apache and Navajo tribes were conducting murderous raids against whites[54]. He used two Indian scouts to help track Chief Cochise for three days and set-up a meeting. Cochise said that they were sick, starving, and dying and just wanted to survive. Howard explained that the President wanted peace and promised very livable conditions with food and medical care if they went to the

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[50] Custer, 361-78.

[51] Sheridan, 475.

[52] Custer, 375.

[53] Sherman, 783.

[54] Oliver O. Howard, *My Experiences Among Our Hostile Indians*. (New York: De Capo Press, 1972); 9.

reservation. He said that this was the only way to protect the Indians and white man and Cochise agreed[55]. This was another example of a tactical level leader who defused a situation without violence through diplomacy and understanding of the environment.

Howard also used these diplomatic skills and understanding to defeat the Pi-Ute Indians who were angered by inconsistent United States governmental policies. The Pi-Ute had lived very peacefully with white settlers for many years. This ended when the settlers became too numerous and took the good land by the rivers and the government began reneging on treaties. The situation finally exploded in 1865 when white settlers accused the Pi-Ute Indians of theft prompting militia soldiers to attack a Pi-Ute village without asking questions. This irrevocably damaged relations with the Pi-Ute who began attacking Whites throughout the northwest[56].

The Pi-Ute joined forces with the Bannock and Columbia River Indians and waited for Howard to send troops to resolve the situation. This would be their excuse to attack. After these tribes conducted a raid in Idaho, killing 30 and stealing two horses, Captains Collins and Bernard set out with their Cavalry troops to find them. They used volunteers and Indian scouts to track them to a village near Silver City. Once Collins and Bernard had them surrounded, Howard sent Sarah Minnenucha, the daughter of a friendly Pi-Ute chief, and two other friendly Pi-Ute to broker a peace deal[57]. They could not get a peace settlement but the meeting allowed them to determine the disposition of the larger hostile force. This allowed Colonel George Forsyth and eight Indian scouts to overtake them and transfer them to the reservation[58].

Later, Colonel Forsyth used these diplomatic skills to defeat hostile Apaches in 1882. Renegade Apaches from Mexico were attacking Arizona reservations and coercing the peaceful

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[55] Howard, 199-208.

[56] Ibid., 374-6.

[57] Ibid., 382-8.

[58] Ibid., 414.

Apaches to escape back to Mexico. These Apaches had accepted many peace treaties with the Indian Bureau but continued their cross border attacks. Forsyth used Apache, Yuma, and Mohave scouts to help track hostiles through the Steins and Guadalupe Passes and into Mexico[59]. Then, Forsyth determined that denying Apaches a safe haven in Mexico outweighed his diplomatic restrictions against entering Mexico. In Mexico, he ran into Colonel Lorenzo Garcia of the Mexican Army who was upset about Forsyth's violation of the international border. He did, however, tell Forsyth that his forces had already attacked and destroyed these Apache warriors the day before. Forsyth convinced Garcia to take him to the battlefield where there were 78 dead Apaches and gave Garcia's men medical care and extra rations[60]. Forsyth was able to use native scouts and work with a commander from a non-allied military to defeat a common enemy and restore peace.

The use of native scouts and volunteer frontiersmen in these examples shows the adaptability of these tactical commanders. This tactic was unnecessary in the Civil War but proved decisive in their new environment. The appreciation of the terrain and enemy forces that these scouts provided was invaluable to tracking hostile Indians through unfamiliar terrain[61]. General George Crook said of native scouts:

> It is the same with these fellows. Nothing breaks them up like turning their own people against them. They don't fear the white soldiers, whom they easily surpass in the particular style of warfare which they force upon us, but put upon their trail an enemy of their own blood, an enemy as tireless, as foxy, and as stealthy and familiar with the country as they themselves, and it breaks them all up. It is not merely a question of catching them better with Indians but of a broader and more enduring aim – their disintegration.[62]

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[59] George A. Forsyth, *Thrilling Days in Army Life.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 79-84.

[60] Ibid., 114-9.

[61] Utley, 53.

[62] Charles F. Lummis, *General Crook and the Apache Wars*. (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1966), 17.

Custer's pursuit of the Arapaho and Cheyenne in February 1869, Howard and Forsyth's pursuit of the Bannock and Pi-Ute in 1876, and Forsyth's pursuit of the Apache in 1882 were just a few of many examples of tactical commanders using native and frontiersmen scouts to track hostile forces.

Tactical and operational commanders' use of diplomacy also demonstrated their adaptability. When the regular forces moved west after the Civil War, they either promised everything or refused to conduct negotiations at all. These leaders later realized that they could not kill all of the Indians and that the Indians actually had legitimate complaints so they adapted and used diplomacy as an effective tool. Hancock had first planned to punish the Cheyenne and Sioux in his 1867 campaign but realized that he could achieve more through negotiations[63]. Custer also used negotiations and deliberately refrained from excessive force in February 1869 when he convinced the remaining Arapaho and Cheyenne to move to the reservation[64]. Finally, Forsyth used negotiations with a Mexican military commander to defeat the Apache who were raiding villages in Arizona[65].

All of these examples show that there were mistakes at all levels in the Indian Wars but that tactical and operational commanders were able to adapt from the conventional symmetric environment of the Civil War to the asymmetric insurgent environment of the Indian Wars. These leaders inherited a hostile situation complicated by bad U.S. government practices, tyrannical treatment by the state militias, and decreased land for the Indians. After initial mistakes that further complicated the situation, these commanders adapted by learning the Indians' culture and vulnerabilities, developing diplomatic skills, dispersing among the population, and using friendly natives and frontiersmen who better understood the environment.

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[63] Custer, 34.

[64] Sheridan, 478.

[65] Forsyth, 117.

These adaptations show that they could effectively transition from conventional operations in the Civil War to counterinsurgency and stability operations. This eventually led to a successful conclusion to the Indian Wars.

Case Study 2: British in WW I

Of the three case studies, the British tactical and operational commanders in the First World War seemed to have the most difficult transition between conventional and counterinsurgency warfare. Digging a little deeper, though, shows there were many factors to consider. There were many examples throughout the war of British commanders who showed very little initiative, trust in their subordinates, or ability to make necessary adjustments in the middle of operations[66]. Years of occupation duty and small wars against non-peer opponents could have been a potential cause. Other potential causes were their loyal support for allies, almost to a fault; gross lack of national preparedness at the beginning of the war; and commanders who, out of necessity, were promoted beyond their experience and expertise. Tactical and operational commanders did make many mistakes that led to British deaths, but they learned and adapted, and in the end, the leadership of British generals was one of the largest factors in the Entente's victory[67].

Many times, British generals failed to adapt to their environments or maintain command and control. During the cavalry retreat of 1914, the British Cavalry Division lacked the staff training, cohesion, and experience against a peer opponent to screen effectively for the British Expeditionary Force (BEF)[68]. During the Battle of the Somme, in June 1916, the British lost many soldiers because they could not accurately determine the effectiveness of their artillery or

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[66] Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front, and the Emergence of Modern Warfare; 1900-1918*. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 85.

[67] Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, *Passchendaele: The Untold Story.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 200.

maintain accurate information about their subordinate units[69]. Finally, at Passchendaele, their fixation on distant objectives across impassible terrain, unsupportable with artillery fire almost proved catastrophic[70].

The cavalry retreat of 1914 showed how much British generals needed to learn about the new challenges of a major conventional war. Although experience in European warfare throughout the late 19th Century taught the French and Germans to limit their cavalry divisions to two brigades, the British still had four brigades which were problematic for command and control. The division staff had also never worked together and none of them, including their division commander, General Edmund Allenby, had ever controlled a division that large. On 22 August 1914, just three weeks after deploying to France, the BEF needed the Calvary Division to screen their front during a retreat from attacking German forces. During this two day rearward movement under constant enemy fire, Allenby lost all communications with his four brigades and the division disintegrated as a screening force[71]. As a result of this debacle, the division was split in two with two brigades in each division and began to train their soldiers in the tactics needed for European warfare[72].

At the Battle of the Somme, British commanders and staffs were unable to visualize the battlefield, synthesize reports, or control their units[73]. After substantial French losses at Verdun in April 1916, the British had to take on more of the Entente's war burden but the results sorely

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[68] Nikolas Gardner, "Command and Control in the 'Great Retreat' of 1914: The Disintegration of the British Cavalry Division," *The Journal of Military History* 63, no. 1 (January 1999), 29.

[69] James E. Edmonds, *History of the Great War; Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1916.* (London: MacMillan and Co. LTD, 1932), 486.

[70] Prior and Wilson, 200.

[71] Gardner, 34-41.

[72] Ibid., 48.

[73] Travers, 189.

disappointed both countries[74]. One reason for their disappointing performance was their gross overestimation of their artillery's effectiveness. Flexible German defenses and imperfections in British artillery practices left many German battle positions completely unsuppressed. British maneuver tactics were also to blame. Given the ineffectiveness of their suppression, they should have attacked with small numbers of lightly equipped soldiers who could penetrate the Germans defenses before the defenders had time to react. Instead, they attacked in large, slowly moving waves, using no cover and concealment, allowing the German machine-gunners to patiently destroy them in detail. Finally, the few battalions that did break through lacked the initiative and training to link-up and exploit success[75].

In a situation similar to the Somme, at Passchendaele, the BEF sustained 275,000 causalities largely due to their commanders' inability to adjust plans when the terrain, weather, and enemy forces did not support their operations. General Douglas Haig directed General Hubert Gough to attack over large open ground so that they could reach the sea before the weather got really bad. General Herbert Plumer initially took a smarter approach, using short, intermediate objectives. However, as weather conditions worsened, he began relentless attacks, disregarding obstacles and ground conditions[76]. In those conditions, the artillery could not move fast enough, leaving infantry soldiers exposed to unhindered enemy fire[77]. In the end, they only advanced four miles in four months to completely indefensible ground at a cost of 275,000 casualties[78]. In March 1918, the Germans gained this same ground back in four days[79].

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[74] Elizabeth Greenhalgh, "'Parade Ground Soldiers': French Army Assessments of the British on the Somme in 1916," *The Journal of Military History* 63, no. 2 (April 1999), 303.

[75] Edmonds, *History of the Great War; Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1916,* 486-90.

[76] Prior and Wilson, 200.

[77] James E. Edmonds, *History of the Great War; Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1917.* (Nashville: Battery Press, 1948), 383.

[78] Prior and Wilson, 195.

In addition to their failures on the western front, British operational commanders lacked the resolve to stand up to national strategic leaders who gave them insufficient resources to accomplish extremely difficult tasks in Mesopotamia and Gallipoli. Many historians blame General John Nixon for the disaster in Mesopotamia because he did not object to his nearly impossible task that ended many soldiers' lives. His task was to seize Baghdad in order to ensure the neutrality of the Arabs. The problem was that he only had one division and 500 miles of exposed lines of communication. He really needed 40,000 soldiers and a railroad to support them. The result was catastrophic; the entire division was either killed or captured and the majority of the captured eventually died in Turkish prisons[80].

At Gallipoli, General Ian Hamilton's task was to seize the peninsula to open sea lanes through the Mediterranean Sea. The problem was that he only had half the forces he needed and little support from his chain of command. The Greeks, who were very familiar with the ground and enemy, said that Hamilton needed 150,000 ground troops for his landing but he only received 75,000. Hamilton also failed to demand the most accurate and timely intelligence briefings on the disposition of the defending Turks, the ocean currents, and the terrain of Gallipoli. Finally, Hamilton completely neglected all logistical planning and did not even bring a Quartermaster General on the operation[81]. Hamilton and the British rushed into an operation that they were completely unprepared for. Because of these failures, British forces sustained over 285,000 casualties and failed to seize the peninsula[82].

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[79] Martin Samuels, *Doctrine and Dogma: German and British Infantry Tactics in the First World War*. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 2.

[80] Edmond Chandler, *The Long Road to Baghdad, Vol. 1*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), 4-8.

[81] John Laffin, *Damn the Dardenelles: The Agony of Gallipoli.* (Gloucestershire: Budding Books, 1980), 30-34.

[82] Ibid., 181.

Although many of these failures seem unforgivable, there were many factors that were outside of the British commanders' control. These included the lack of preparedness of the British nation and military as a whole, the political limitations placed on them, and the inexperience of their junior leaders. Sir Douglas Haig, Commander of the BEF, largely attributed the length of the war to overall lack of British preparedness at the beginning of the war:

> The second consequence of our unpreparedness was that our Armies were unable to intervene, either at the outset of the war or until nearly two years had elapsed, in sufficient strength to adequately assist our Allies. The enemy was able to gain a notable initial advantage by establishing himself in Belgium and northern France, and throughout the early stages of the war was free to concentrate an undue proportion of his effectiveness against France and Russia. The excessive burden thrown on the gallant Army of France during this period caused them losses, the effect of which has been felt all through the war and directly influenced its length.[83]

A general lack of experience also prevented leaders from concentrating on their jobs because they had to focus more attention on teaching their subordinates how to do theirs. Finally, at the Somme, Passchendaele, and Mesopotamia, British leaders had to make militarily inadvisable decisions because of political considerations.

At the outset of the First World War, Great Britain was woefully unprepared as a nation to fight a war that size. As a result of their lack of preparedness, the Army had to grow from 250,000 in 1914 to 4,970,000 a year later[84]. This rapid growth meant that the soldiers in 1916 were far inferior to those in 1914 because they lacked sufficient training and their leaders were largely inexperienced[85]. In *History of the Great War in France and Germany, 1916*, James Edmonds said:

> The 1st of July 1916 remains witness for all time that neither armies nor munitions can be produced by merely calling for them, and that although the courage and goodwill of all ranks may at tremendous cost compensate to some

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[83] J.H. Boraston, ed. *Sir Douglas Haig Despatches.* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons LTD, 1919), 322.

[84] Samuels, 149.

[85] Edmonds, *History of the Great War, Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1916*, 492.

> extent for lack of military skill and experience, nothing can compensate for national unpreparedness for war.[86]

Also, the British industrial strength did not reach full capacity until 1918. Until then, commanders had insufficient small arms weapons, artillery, and ammunition to support ground operations[87]. Finally, after the war had already begun, they had to modernize their tactics to account for the effectiveness of modern weapons and European warfare. They had to learn combined arms warfare, use of cover, and field craft[88].

An additional effect of the British Army's rapid growth, coupled with early causalities, was the necessity for micromanaging junior leaders. By 1916, many high level commanders had not even been in the military before the start of the war or were commanding much larger organizations than they ever had before[89]. The inexperience of the British non-commissioned officers caused very high casualties among junior officers who felt they needed to do their NCOs' jobs[90]. Another reason for micromanagement was that British officers got two months of prewar training compared to several years for German officers[91]. This forced British commanders to command three levels down, reducing their initiative. By contrast, German commanders only had to command one level down, allowing their subordinates much more latitude[92]. This lack of initiative resulting from inexperience manifested itself at the Somme where German commanders blamed the British defeat on untrained soldiers and junior commanders who could not seize the initiative, "But, owing to insufficient training, they were not skillful in action. They often failed

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[86] Edmonds, *History of the Great War, Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1916*, 493.

[87] Boraston, 322.

[88] Edward Spiers, "The Regular Army in 1914," in *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War*, ed. Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 57.

[89] Boraston, 347.

[90] Spiers, 87.

[91] Samuels, 158.

[92] Ibid., 139.

to grasp the necessity for rapid independent decision. They were in many cases unequal to dealing with sudden unexpected changes in the situation[93]."

Recognition of France's sacrifices for the Entente during the first two years of the war also affected British decision making. Haig had to delay the battle of the Somme and conduct it further south to support the French operation at Verdun despite his recognition that fighting further north and six weeks earlier would take advantage of weaknesses in the German defenses[94]. Haig also conducted the Passchendaele offensive to give the French and Russians time to recover and to disrupt German U-Boat bases in Flanders[95]. Finally, he wanted to start this offensive in April, with more suitable weather, but French General Nivelle insisted that he support the French offensives at Arras and Aisne during the same time period[96].

Germany's desire for a foothold in the Middle East forced another militarily inadvisable decision. At Mesopotamia, the British needed to seize Baghdad, despite insufficient numbers of soldiers because the Germans were attempting to gain traction in the Islamic world that could incite a Bengal Muslim rebellion against the Indian government. That would force the British to move more forces to India and stretch their military to a breaking point[97].

The important thing was that despite all of their external pressures and their unqualified junior leaders, the British Generals showed many signs of learning and adapting during the war. During the Passchendaele offensive, Gough and Plumer tried to cancel the attack because of the weather and their inability to bring their artillery forward, but Haig refused because of the importance of disrupting German U-Boat operations in Flanders[98]. The British cavalry's

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[93] Edmonds, *History of the Great War, Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1916*, 491.

[94] Edmonds, *History of the Great War, Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1916*, 484.

[95] Lyn MacDonald, *They Called it Passchendaele*. (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1978), 61.

[96] Edmunds, *History of the Great War, Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1917*, viii.

[97] Chandler, 280.

[98] MacDonald, 204.

reorganization and retraining after the 'Great Retreat' also gave them a mobile counterattack force that was decisive in defeating the 1918 German offensive[99]. Finally, Haig's calm resolve in the summer of 1918 allowed British forces to halt this offensive[100].

In addition to these successes, many of the operations that British generals were most criticized for were the ones that ultimately led to victory. Although the British sustained 419,000 casualties at the Somme, the price of 445,000 casualties was much higher for the Germans who did not have nearly as much manpower to draw from[101]. In the Passchendaele offensive, the Germans lost over 200,000 men. This coupled with the British Naval blockade prevented the Germans from sustaining their spring 1918 offensive[102]. This British offensive was also vital because it gave the French time to reconstitute, helping prevent their collapse, and allowed the United States to mobilize and deploy to theater[103]. Finally, historian James Edmonds said that at Passchendaele, where the British and allies had 60 divisions against 88 German divisions, "One should not ask why it was not a complete success but rather how they could break the will of the Germans with such inferior numbers[104]."

Although it appears at first glance that the British tactical and operational commanders in World War I lacked the ability to learn and adapt, it was precisely that ability that led the Entente to victory. Although they made many initial mistakes, they transformed a parade ground colonial force into a formidable fighting force and grew the junior leaders almost from scratch to defeat one of the most highly trained armies in history. Many of the mistakes that the British commanders made were the result of alliance considerations, the need to protect the Empire in the

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[99] Boraston, 328.

[100] Wilson and Prior, 200.

[101] Edmonds, *History of the Great War, Military Operations in France and Germany; 1916,* 493.

[102] Boraston, 327.

[103] Prior and Wilson, 196.

[104] Edmonds, *History of the Great War, Military Operations in France and Belgium; 1917,* 387.

Middle East, and insufficient national preparedness. In the end, they were able to make the timely decisions necessary to wear down and ultimately defeat the German military.

Case Study 3: British in the Malayan Emergency

The Malayan Emergency was a guerilla insurgency conducted by Malayan Communist Party (MCP) against the government of Malaya and its British protectors. The British declared the "Emergency" on June 18, 1948 in response to the communists beginning their open insurgency by attacking and killing three British rubber planters[105]. This began a 12-year counterinsurgent war that resulted in a free, independent, and ethnically integrated Malaya.

In the Malayan Emergency, British commanders with experience primarily in major combat operations in World War II quickly adapted to counterinsurgency. Although the British Army had a long history of counterinsurgency and stability operations, the majority of the officers who were fighting the Malayan Emergency were initially unprepared for that type of operation[106]. In the beginning, they tried to fight the Chinese insurgents with conventional tactics but became frustrated by the insurgents' unwillingness to fight on their terms[107]. Later strategies focused on denying the insurgents a sanctuary, rewarding both Malayans and Chinese who helped the counterinsurgency, and taking away the insurgents' cause. Throughout the operation, the British tactical and operational commanders showed an amazing ability to unlearn their inapplicable experiences and take a fresh look at this specific environment.

The Malayan Races' Liberation Army (MRLA) was a disaffected product of the British war with Japan and poor British practices after the war. In 1942, the British formed the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) from approximately 200 members of the MCP to help

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[105] Thomas E. Willis II, "Lessons from the Past: Successful British Counterinsurgency Operations in Malaya 1948-1960," *Infantry* 94, no. 4 (Jul/Aug 2005): 38.

[106] Ibid., 39.

[107] Brian Drohan, "An Integrated Approach: British Political-Military Strategy in the Malayan Emergency," *Armor* 115, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2006): 35.

combat the Japanese[108]. In 1945, the British granted them legal status but by 1947, the MCP grew frustrated because the British had not paved the way for the ethnically Chinese population to gain full Malayan citizenship[109]. In December 1947, the MCP started their revolt with labor disputes and strikes and by secretly forming the MRLA[110]. British intelligence failures allowed the MRLA attacks against planters and mine workers in June of 1948 to completely shock their unprepared forces[111].

After these initial failures, many historians discredit the British success because the insurgents were racially different from the rest of the population and largely ineffective. In 1949, despite their efforts to recruit from the ethnically Indian and Malayan populations and renaming themselves the Malayan Races' Liberation Army, the insurgency was still 95% ethnically Chinese. The Chinese government also turned its back on them, taking away the insurgent's one source of external support and forcing them to rely on the resources that the British had given them to fight the Japanese[112]. Finally, they severely hurt their cause by attacking the British before they had gained support from the majority of the country's non-Chinese population[113].

Despite these advantages for the counterinsurgent force, this was an extremely difficult operation from the start because Malaya was ideal for an insurgency. Although it was easy to distinguish the ethnically Chinese insurgents from the rest of the population, they had a significant base of support. In 1947, they had the support of almost the entire Chinese population, whereas the Malayan government's inability to provide essential services precluded it

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[108] *The Conduct of Anti-terrorist Operations in Malaya* (St. Petersburg: Hailer Publishing, 1958): II, 2.

[109] Willis, 37.

[110] *The Conduct of Anti-terrorist Operations in Malaya*, II, 5.

[111] John Coats, *Suppressing Insurgency: An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency; 1948-1954* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 25.

[112] Ibid, 49.

from gaining support from the rest[114]. The thick jungle covering three-quarters of the country also gave the insurgents a natural safe-haven[115]. In *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, David Galula wrote about terrain, "It helps the insurgent insofar as it is rugged and difficult, either because of mountains and swamps or because of vegetation[116]." This almost exactly describes the terrain of Malaya. R.E.R. Robinson, a British Company Commander in Malaya, also said of these insurgents in the jungle:

> To begin with, the jungle, though said to be neutral, undoubtedly favors the pursued. Anyone who has been inside it knows how close a man can lie hidden within a few yards of his pursuers. In addition to this, the bandit is a master at falsifying his tracks.[117]

At the beginning of the emergency, the British used a heavy-handed approach that had worked for them in past counterinsurgency operations. The initial British policies were detention, deportation, and collective punishment of entire towns and villages[118]. The British severely or fatally punished anyone they caught supplying the MRLA guerillas[119]. This heavy-handed approach aimed primarily against the Chinese guerillas played right into the MRLA propaganda, by showing that the government did care not about the needs and interests of the ethnically Chinese[120].

The British attacks on the insurgents were part of a very unsuccessful conventional approach. Initially, the British Army's lack of information about the enemy prevented them from

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[113] Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya; 1948-1960* (New York: Crane, Russack, and Company, Inc., 1975), 449.

[114] J.L. Hillard, "Tactics in Malaya," *Army Quarterly* (April 1951): 80.

[115] Walter C. Ladwig III, "Managing Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Malaya," *Military Review* 87, no. 3 (May/Jun 2007): 57.

[116] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1964), 36.

[117] R.E.R Robinson, "Reflections of a Company Commander in Malaya," *Army Quarterly* (October 1950): 83.

[118] Drohan, 35.

[119] Willis, 38.

finding large groups of insurgents. The British used large battalion and brigade sized sweeps that were slow moving and based on scant intelligence, often only finding recently abandoned guerilla camps[121]. The British also became increasingly frustrated because they would clear an area only to have it fall back into enemy hands as soon as they left[122]. Finally, the enemy's unwillingness to stand and fight demoralized British soldiers; they would raid or ambush British units and then melt back into the population[123]. Tactical commanders soon realized that the only way to find and destroy terrorist camps was with small unit patrols, acting on reliable intelligence[124].

Lt. Gen. Harold Briggs changed the overall course in Malaya when he became director of operations in 1950[125]. Briggs correctly perceived that this was not a conventional war but a competition for governance[126]. The "Briggs Plan" stressed winning support of the populace rather than defeating the insurgents militarily[127]. He determined that security and confidence could only be gained through demonstrating British resolve to fulfill its obligations in Malaya, extending effective administration to all populated areas, and exploiting these measures with positive propaganda[128].

The first tenet of the "Briggs Plan" was relocating the squatters who were providing a base of support for the insurgents. Briggs force-relocated Chinese squatters into government controlled villages. He then provided education and medical care in these new villages that were

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[120] Drohan, 36.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Coats, 95.

[123] Charles Allen, *The Savage Wars of Peace* (London: Michael Joseph LTD, 1990), 9.

[124] Robinson, 81.

[125] Drohan, 36.

[126] Coats, 82.

[127] Drohan, 36.

[128] Coats, 82.

far superior to any they had ever had[129]. The intent was to resettle these squatters into villages that were more manageable and no longer breeding grounds for insurgents[130]. Relocation of over 400,000 squatters denied the insurgents the support that they desperately needed and the tact with which the British soldiers conducted it earned the loyalty of a segment of the population that would have otherwise sided with the insurgents[131].

Briggs also established a "Home Guard" system for citizens to help patrol their own neighborhoods. This program had very mixed results. The plan was for the military to give villagers weapons to use against the insurgents, freeing the police force for the conventional law enforcement needs of the country[132]. The program had little effect in the beginning primarily because of a lack of weapons and friction between Briggs and the police commissioner[133]. In the long run, though, this program not only increased security, but also it freed the police for other operations and increased Malayan confidence that they could secure themselves[134].

In addition to the squatter relocation and home guard programs, he established a system of governance to minister to the needs of the people, recognizing that a counterinsurgency fight is more political than military. No plan would be effective without extremely tight civil-military coordination. He established State and District War Executive Committees (SWECs and DWECs) to administer to the needs of all people including the Chinese population[135]. They would discuss issues such as food control, resettlement, and labor troubles that would allow them

[129] Drohan, 36.

[130] Coats, 88.

[131] Willis, 39.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Coats, 95.

[134] Willis, 40.

[135] Ladwig, 60.

to defeat the insurgents militarily while winning the hearts and minds of the people[136]. This took away much of the insurgents' message that the government was unwilling to take care of the needs of the people[137].

Finally, Briggs changed the patrolling techniques and procedures, helping to find and eliminate the insurgents. During his tenure in Malaya, the British ground forces increased from three combat battalions to ten, allowing them to better saturate areas, deny the enemy sanctuaries, and take the initiative[138]. He also made these forces live in the villages with the people and conduct patrols within a five hour radius to disperse and disrupt the MRLA[139]. Next, he set up the Jungle Warfare Training School in Kota Tingi to prepare soldiers for this alien and hostile environment[140]. British junior leaders in Malaya credited this school with developing the battle drills required to effectively defeat the enemy forces they made contact with[141].

When General Gerald Templar took over the Malayan operation at the end of 1951, he was able to build on Briggs' programs and provide more effective control. The main inhibitor for Briggs to win the peace in Malaya was his lack of autonomy over all areas, especially the police[142]. Based on Briggs' recommendations, the British government consolidated command and control of all police, military, and civil activities under Templar in December 1951. Upon arriving in country, Templar emphasized the need for all Malayans to take responsibility for securing their country[143]. Templar expressed his vision in a memorandum upon taking command saying, "Any idea that the business of normal government and the business of the Emergency are

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[136] Willis, 39.

[137] Ladwig, 60.

[138] Allen, 19.

[139] Willis, 38.

[140] Allen, 25.

[141] Robinson, 84.

[142] Coats, 101.

two separate entities must be killed for good and all…the two activities are completely and utterly interrelated[144]."

Templar's first program was to consolidate power at all levels of government to better meet the needs of the people. By integrating power at the local level under the SWECs and DWECs, he prevented stove-piping of information, increased predictive analysis, and made all operations more integrated and effective[145]. Integrated civil and military councils at lower levels also enabled leaders to make advised decisions and decreased the time it took to affect necessary changes[146]. These successful operations allowed Templar to disseminate positive public relations messages and earn more popular support[147].

Next, Templar expanded the "Home Guard" program to establish "White Areas", rewarding sections of the country that denied the enemy sanctuary. Templar and his staff conducted initial assessments of villages and gave the ones with high insurgent activity strict curfews and food restrictions[148]. In contrast, they declared the more stable and secure sections of Malaya "White Areas" where travel, curfew, and food restrictions were lifted. This provided an incentive for citizens to support the government's efforts in combating the insurgency[149]. By 1955, progress was easy to see as almost two-thirds of the country was considered "White Areas," helping to further co-opt the people[150].

Templar also integrated Malayan and British patrols and government. This further increased Malayan confidence that they could secure and govern themselves. Once the Malayan

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[143] Willis, 39.

[144] Ladwig, 62.

[145] Allen, 41.

[146] Drohan, 37.

[147] Coats, 126.

[148] Ibid., 128.

[149] Drohan, 36.

government in an area was able to govern itself, the British officials would actually subordinate themselves to that government[151]. To further help this transition, Templar provided civics courses to Malayan officials so that they could better meet the needs of the people[152]. They also increased the number of Malayan and Chinese soldiers in their patrols and military operations which improved their legitimacy in the eyes of the populace[153]. The increased integration and support from the people also translated into better intelligence about the dispositions of insurgent forces[154].

This increased intelligence, in turn, made combat patrols more effective. Templar revamped the intelligence structure with an inner ring for the deep jungle and an outer ring for the fringe areas that harbored the insurgents. As a result, by 1954, ground forces conducted almost all operations based on actual intelligence[155]. This allowed them to cut off the insurgents' supplies, recruits, and intelligence[156]. The intelligence even allowed them to copy the insurgents' signals and bait them into contact[157].

Finally, Templar was successful in Malaya because he eliminated the insurgents' cause by guaranteeing independence, further improving government services, and integrating the ethnically Chinese into the government and military. He slowly integrated the Chinese into the military and political systems, allowing them to prove their loyalty and reliability to the Malayans. This approach also helped eliminate Chinese fears of retribution and diminished their

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[150] Allen, 46.

[151] Lagwig, 62.

[152] Willis, 40.

[153] Drohan, 37.

[154] Willis, 42.

[155] Coats, 125.

[156] Short, 502.

[157] Allen, 16.

ties to the insurgency[158]. Self-determination in 1955 and independence in 1957 destroyed the insurgents' recruiting slogan of anti-colonialism and took away the majority of the power they had left[159].

In addition to these policies by both Briggs and Templar, the discipline and professionalism of the British soldiers throughout the Emergency was crucial to their success. Strict discipline by British soldiers was essential to their success because it prevented the insurgents from using atrocities as propaganda against the government[160]. Since the side that wins the support of the people almost always wins counterinsurgency wars, the British knew that fair and just treatment would be far more likely to achieve success than tyranny[161]. Major Harvey, a British company commander in Malaya, said, "Good faith shown forth through deeds is what the simple mind comprehends. Behind friendship and confidence comes information; the only elixir of military success[162]."

In Malaya, operational level commanders like Briggs and Templar were able to transition from their conventional World War II experience to success in counterinsurgency. Although many say that a clearly identifiable enemy made the British success inevitable, the terrain and circumstances of Malaya made it the ideal place for an insurgency. Smart British policies and the ability of their commanders to take a fresh look at this situation ensured their success. Briggs started on the road to victory with the resettlement of squatters, home guards, and better patrolling techniques. Templar completed the task by integrating all levels of political and military control, creating white areas, and promising independence.

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[158] Short, 504.

[159] Willis, 39; Allen, 40.

[160] Short, 501.

[161] Allen, 52.

[162] M. Harvey, "Malaya-Time for a Change," *Army Quarterly* (April 1955): 42.

Summary

These three case studies show that tactical and operational commanders and their soldiers can adapt to any environment they encounter if they are committed to learning. The commanders in all three case studies had to put aside the majority of their recent war-fighting experience to learn a new form of warfare. The leaders in the Indian Wars: Sherman, Sheridan, Hancock, Howard, and Custer, had all recently finished fighting the Civil War against an extremely symmetric enemy before moving west. Of the British leaders in World War I, Haig had spent the majority of his career fighting counterinsurgency and stability operations in India, South Africa, and Sudan; Gough in South Africa and Ireland; and Allenby in the Boer and Zulu Wars. Finally, of the British Generals who turned around the Emergency in Malaya, Briggs commanded World War II conventional units in Africa and Burma and Templar in Africa and Europe.

The mental flexibility of these commanders and their ability to transition between these two kinds of warfare do not show a need for two different ground forces, according to the methodology of this study. First, failures resulting from imprudent policy formation at the national strategic level or other external factors do not prove a need for two forces. Second, a minority of tactical or operational commanders who could not initially recognize their changed environments but were able to quickly learn and adapt also does not prove a need for two forces. Only evidence of a majority of tactical and operational commanders who could not quickly recognize the changed nature of their environments and new requirements would prove a need for two forces. Although many of these commanders made serious mistakes that could have led to failure, their ability to learn and adapt to all operations, across the spectrum of warfare, eventually led to victory.

In addition to learning a new form of warfare, many of these leaders had to compensate for mistakes that were outside of their purview. In the Indian Wars, the commanders who moved west after the Civil War had to deal with hostilities resulting from reduced Indian land, tyrannical western militias, and inconsistent government policies. Similarly, loyal support for allies, lack of

national preparation, and inexperienced subordinate commanders were all external factors that made the British success in the First World War quite extraordinary. Finally, Generals Briggs and Templar had to overcome physical terrain that was ideal for an insurgency and years of British neglect in Malaya. In view of the first decision criterion, these failures at the national strategic level and other external factors do not demonstrate a need for two forces.

These leaders also made many of their own mistakes that almost caused their countries to fail. Sherman's ill-advised statements, Hancock's burning of the Pawnee Fork Village, and Sheridan's initial diplomacy failures all proved that these Indian War commanders needed to quickly learn and adapt if the U.S. was going to succeed. Likewise, in the First World War, poor command and control and unsatisfactory planning led to tens of thousands of British casualties at the Somme, Passchendaele, Mesopotamia, and Gallipoli. In Malaya, the initial British conventional approach was almost fatal.

In view of the second decision criterion, leaders learned from these initial failures and adapted to their new challenges. In all three case studies, commanders immediately faced problems that were at the opposite end of the war-fighting spectrum from any they had previously faced. Generals who had just fought the most symmetric threat imaginable discovered ways to integrate native scouts and use diplomatic weapons instead of firing weapons. Generals who had only ever presided over British colonies and never faced a peer enemy, adapted to defeat the most lethal army of the time. Finally, generals who had defeated the conventional German and Japanese threats quickly learned that earning popular support was more important than militarily defeating the insurgents in Malaya. They all found innovative solutions to problems that would have never even occurred to them while they were fighting their last conflicts.

In the Indian Wars, commanders quickly adapted to their new environments by using diplomacy and indigenous scouts to defeat native forces. Hancock's restraint and diplomacy during his 1868 meetings with Indian leaders showed that he had learned from his village burning mistake. After initially refusing to meet with Indian leaders to discuss their legitimate concerns,

Sheridan studied Indian patterns and culture and recruited local scouts to bring the majority of the Kiowa, Comanche, and Arapaho to the reservation. Finally, Sherman realized that the Army needed to move off of their large forts into small outposts where they could effectively control the countryside, showing how much he had learned since his initial damaging statements. Custer, Howard, and Forsyth were also leaders from the Civil War who used diplomacy, scouts, and other ingenious techniques to make the west safer for settlers and Indians.

In World War I, British commanders who had been fighting nothing but colonial wars against non-peer opponents for over a half-century adapted to twentieth century European warfare. After a difficult initial mobilization, British commanders started turning the tide with 445,000 German casualties at the Somme. 200,000 more German casualties at Passchendaele helped prevent a breakthrough during their spring, 1918 offensive. Finally, Haig's calm resolve and restructuring of the Cavalry Division into a mobile counterattack force were decisive in defeating this offensive. Most importantly, these commanders, who had rarely worked with other Europeans powers, recognized the importance of supporting their allies, even when it did not appear to be in their own military's best interest. That was a significant key to the Entente's victory.

As in the other two case studies, after some initial blunders, Generals Briggs and Templar enacted policies in Malaya that counterinsurgent leaders can still draw lessons from. The "Home Guard", "White Area", and resettlement programs that these conventional World War II commanders started, took away the insurgents' support. Restructuring the intelligence infrastructure and developing appropriate patrolling techniques prevented the insurgents from establishing a base of operations. Finally, integrating the ethnically Chinese into the government and military and empowering the Malayans were the final steps to ensuring a unified and peaceful Malaya.

In all of these case studies, the leaders embraced the war they were fighting and adapted to its challenges. After some initial mistakes, these commanders took a learning approach to each

situation they faced. They were all in unfamiliar territory and had to learn a new form of warfare. The important thing was that they recognized that their current conflict was of vital national interest and found innovative ways to succeed.

If these leaders could adapt to their new environments, there is no reason why American military leaders cannot adapt to any situation they face. Just as the leaders in these three case studies had, American military leaders need a mindset that will allow them to adapt to any situation. There is no point in debating about what operations the United States military should conduct; leaders need to train their troops for the operations that they will conduct. American military leaders must develop an extremely effective stability and counterinsurgency force without losing their conventional deterrence.

Recommendations

The American Army in the Indian Wars, the British Army in World War I, and the British Army in Malaya all proved that the same ground forces can transition between major combat operations and stability and counterinsurgency operations. The question is how the United States military can best train its forces for the full spectrum of operations given its limited training time and personnel. The key is developing adaptive leaders, at all levels, who can quickly transition between missions, instead of developing specific technical skills.

Recent U.S. military history shows the vital importance of preparing soldiers to rapidly transition between these operations[163]. Units that deploy primarily for major combat operations can find themselves conducting mostly counterinsurgency and stability operations and vice versa. The United States military must take a holist approach to training that focuses on all of these missions simultaneously. The key is developing the cognitive processes signatory of adaptive

[163] Nadia Shadlow, Charles Barry, and Richard Lacquement, "A Return to the Army's Roots: Governance, Stabilization, and Reconstruction, in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 261.

leaders and soldiers instead of specific technical skills that are not easily transferable. Leaders also need to focus training on those skills that are common to all military operations[164]. Finally, leaders should avoid fixating on their apparent next mission; they need to use the majority of their available training time to focus on their weakest common mission tasks. Properly training soldiers to successfully complete all of these operations will increase their confidence and reduce stress, further adding to unit effectiveness[165].

The reality of complex contemporary warfare is that there is not a clear separation between the missions that the leviathan and system administrator forces would prosecute. Regardless of whether forces deploy for major combat or stability operations, if they take up arms in someone else's country, they are at war[166]. In Operation Restore Hope in 1993, U.S. and coalition forces deployed to Somalia for humanitarian assistance but the situation on the ground required them to quickly transition to combat operations. Conversely, in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), in 2003, U.S. and coalition forces should have been prepared to conduct counterinsurgency and stability operations as soon as the ground war began. Out of necessity, forces need to deploy with a full range of capabilities[167].

With this reality in mind, at the beginning of their planning process, planners need to think through how major combat operations will impact stability operations[168]. Many of the tactics that bring the most decisive victory in combat operations prove to be the most detrimental in the aftermath. For example, U.S. commanders needed to assess the economic, political, and

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[164] John P. DiGiambattista, "Accepting the Challenge: Examining Infantry and Military Police Employment of Competencies on the Twenty-first Century Battlefield" (master's thesis, U.S. Command and General Staff College, 2003). This provided the thought process of training skills common to more than one type of mission, as well as relevant sources.

[165] Dave Grossman, *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace* (New York: PPCT Research Publications, 2004), 36.

[166] Daniel P. Bolger, *Savage Peace: Americans at War in the 1990s* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1995), 381.

[167] Ibid., 384.

societal impacts of destroying bridges during the OIF ground war on stability and counterinsurgency operations. For this reason, leaders need to fully integrate combat, stability, and counterinsurgency training and planning. It would be inappropriate and even costly to keep them separate[169].

To properly integrate these forces and functions, the military must train leaders and soldiers to think conceptually instead of developing narrowly focused technical skills. For the complex contemporary operating environment, military professionals need all the expertise of professors, athletes, ambassadors, and war-fighters[170]. The military needs to train leaders and soldiers to adapt to unforeseen scenarios with sound judgment[171]. This starts with pre-commissioning training covering a wider array of competencies, giving newly commissioned officers a more conceptual understanding of any situation they face[172]. Finally, trainers need to leverage the overlap between the tactical combat skills defined in FM 3-90 (Tactics), the stability skills defined in FM 3-07 (Stability Operations and Support Operations), and the counterinsurgency skills defined in FM 3-24 (Counterinsurgency).

Leaders need to study the tactical combat skills in FM 3-90 to see which ones are transferable to stability and counterinsurgency operations. There is an inherent need for sound intelligence in combat operations because less intelligence means more risk and uncertainty, requiring commanders to use a larger reconnaissance effort and reserve, more security, and fewer simultaneous operations[173]. Also, commanders must initiate operations on their own terms by

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[168] Shadlow, Barry, and Lacquement, 252.

[169] Ibid., 261.

[170] Richard Lacquement, "Mapping Army Professional Expertise and Clarifying Jurisdictions of Practice," in *The Future of the Army Profession,* ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005): 221.

[171] Shadlow, Barry, and Lacquement, 263.

[172] Lacquement, 221.

[173] *FM 3-90: Tactics* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2001), 1:13.

maneuvering more rapidly than their adversaries to gain a situational advantage, exploit this advantage with firepower, and achieve and maintain information superiority. These operations require many transferable skills including land navigation, marksmanship, communications, targeting, and staff and coalition integration. Finally, commanders need the intellectual agility to determine the most effective approach to any situation because there are no doctrinally prescribed solutions[174].

As with combat skills, many stability skills outlined in FM 3-07 are transferable to other operations. These operations require the ability to work through unity of command issues inherent in joint, interagency, and multinational operations[175]. Noncombatants also create a serious challenge in stability operations because it is often very difficult to distinguish them from the enemy[176]. The U.S. faced this same challenge during initial major combat operations in OIF when their major resistance came from non-uniformed suicide bombers[177]. Timely and accurate information in stability operations also encourages audacity and facilitates exploitation of opportunities[178]. Finally, stability operations require fire support for deterrence and detailed targeting to achieve desired effects[179].

Similarly, there are many skills that FM 3-24 prescribes for counterinsurgency operations that are also necessary in combat and stability operations. These operations require a mixture of combat, training of host-nation forces, restoration of essential services, governance, and economic development. All of these operations must be tied together with effective information

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[174] *FM 3-9*, 1:15.

[175] *FM 3-07: Stability Operations and Support Operations* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2003), 1:16.

[176] Ibid., 1:17.

[177] Gordon and Trainor, 304.

[178] *FM 3-07*, 2:3.

[179] Ibid., 2:6.

operations[180]. Counterinsurgency operations should begin by controlling key areas with security and influence, and then spreading out from those secure areas. These operations require many transferable skills such as land navigation, marksmanship, and appreciation for other cultures. Finally, targeting is the key for all information, civil-military, governance, and direct action operations[181].

Leaders need to focus their training on the similarities between these required missions[182]. An American soldier, after completing training at the British National Search Center prior to his Kosovo mission said, "This training will help me perform my peacekeeping mission better. However, the skills I learned, how to clear a room, perform route search, and search personnel, are also skills I can use in war-fighting[183]." All of these missions need soldiers who can navigate, employ fire support, and react appropriately to all threats. Leaders must also train their soldiers for cultural awareness to better predict the effects of their operations on civilians, allies, and enemy forces. Additionally, staffs at all levels need to train the targeting process to better employ intelligence and delivery assets to achieve the greatest positive effects. Finally, soldiers need to learn to work with joint and multinational forces in combat, stability, or counterinsurgency operations.

In addition to leveraging the similarities between mission requirements, leaders need to resist the temptation to fixate on their present fight. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, stressed the importance of training skills not required in the current counterinsurgency fights in Iraq and Afghanistan in his October 2007 speech to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College:

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[180] *FM 3-24*, 5:3–18.

[181] Ibid., 5:29.

[182] Shadlow, Barry, and Lacquement, 263.

[183] Christopher Simpson, "Search, Mission Essential Tasks for a 21st Century Conflict," *Army* (December 2002): 35.

> I don't believe that we are just going to be a COIN force in the future. I think we've got to train and be mindful of the requirements of a broader spectrum of requirements. We've got requirements on the books right now that certainly demand that. And there's no question that what's going on in Iraq and Afghanistan has had a significant impact on that kind of training, both in the Army and in the Marine Corps; there's absolutely no doubt about that. So when we have these opportunities like we do with these young officers, and the non-coms who are training as we speak, I think we've got to take advantage of that. I think the leadership had got to hit that balance right, and we just can't write off not doing that stuff ever again, or for as long as we can see into the future because I think we would, in fact, put ourselves at significantly greater risk.[184]

To this end, Combat Training Centers should develop scenarios that train elements of combat operations, stability, and counterinsurgency. Most importantly, the scenarios should quickly transition between these missions, reflecting situations like Somalia and OIF.

That ability to quickly transition between combat and stability operations is critical in contemporary warfare. This is the period when friendly forces will either win or lose the people's support. To ease this transition, the U.S. military needs to better integrate stability capabilities into the force structure of combat organizations[185]. This will help combat commanders recognize the implications of their decisions during major combat operations and facilitate the transition to stability or counterinsurgency operations.

Above all else, training needs to integrate all aspects of warfare. In today's complex operating environment, soldiers must be ready to rapidly transition between combat, stability, and counterinsurgency operations. The United States Army in the Indian Wars, the British Army in World War I, and the British Army in Malaya all showed that the same ground forces can transition between these missions. Military leaders need to ensure that they can perform them all effectively by focusing their training on the mission commonalities not on the specifics of their

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[184] Admiral Michael Mullens, speaking to the United States Army Command and General Staff College, on October 23, 2007.

[185] Shadlow, Barry, and Lacquement, 261-6.

current fight. This requires a cognitive not technical approach. The goal is to build a force capable of reacting to any scenario with sound judgment.

APPENDIX 1: Definitions

- Asymmetry: Dissimilarities in organization, equipment, doctrine, and values between other armed forces (formally organized or not) and US forces (FM 3-0).
- Battle Drills: a collective action rapidly executed without applying a deliberate decision-making process (FM 25-101).
- Combat Training Centers: The National Training Center, Joint Readiness Training Center, Joint Multinational Readiness Center, and Battle Command Training Program provide highly realistic and stressful joint and combined arms training according to Army and Joint doctrine. This training approximates actual combat (AR 350-50).
- Complexity: The amount of uncertainty in the effects that actions will cause (*Harnessing Complexity* – Robert Axelrod and Michael Cohen).
- Counterinsurgency Operations: Those political, economic, military, paramilitary, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency (JP 1-02).
- Cover: The action by land, air, or sea forces to protect by offense, defense, or threat of either or both (FM 1-02).
- Disposition of Forces: Distribution of the elements of command within an area, usually the exact location of each subordinate unit headquarters and the deployment of forces subordinate to it (FM 1-02).
- Fire Support: Fires that directly support land, maritime, amphibious, and special operations forces to engage enemy forces, combat formations, and facilities in pursuit of tactical and operational objectives (JP 1-02).
- Full Spectrum Operations: The range of operations Army forces conduct in war and military operations other than war (FM 3-0).

- Insurgency: An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion or armed conflict (JP 1-02).
- Interagency Operations: Within the context of Department of Defense involvement, the coordination that occurs between elements of Department of Defense and engaged US Government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and regional and international organizations for the purpose of accomplishing an objective (JP 3-57).
- Joint: Connotes activities, operations, organizations, etc., in which elements of two or more Military Departments participate (JP 0-2).
- Line of Communication: A route, either land, water, and/or air, that connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and forces move (FM 1-02).
- Mission: The task, together with purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore (FM 101-5).
- Multinational Operations: A collective term to describe military actions conducted by forces of two or more nations usually undertaken within the structure of a coalition or alliance (JP1-02).
- Noncommissioned Officer: An enlisted member of the armed forces, such as a corporal, sergeant, or petty officer, appointed to a rank conferring leadership over other enlisted personnel (American Heritage Dictionary).
- Operational level: The level at which campaigns and major operations are conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations (FM 3-0).
- Sanctuary: A place of refuge or asylum (American Heritage Dictionary).

- Screen: A form of Army operations that provides early warning to the protected force (FM 3-90).
- Seize: A tactical mission that involves taking possession of a designated area using overwhelming force (FM 3-90).
- Stability Operations: An overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside of the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief (JP 3-0).
- Situational Awareness: Knowledge or understanding of the current situation which promotes timely, relevant, and accurate assessment of friendly, enemy, and other operations within the battle-space in order to facilitate decision-making. An informational perspective and skill that foster an ability to determine quickly the context and relevance of events that are unfolding (FM 1-02).
- Stove-pipe: To develop, or be developed, in an isolated environment; to solve narrow goals or meet specific needs in a way not readily compatible with other systems (Double Tongued Dictionary).
- Strategic Level: The level at which a nation, often as one of a group of nations, determines national and multinational security objectives and guidance and develops and uses the national resources to accomplish them (FM 3-0).
- Tactical Level: The employment of units in contact (FM 3-0).
- Targeting: The process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, taking account of operational requirements and capabilities (JP 1-02).

- Unity of Command: One of the nine principles of war: For every objective, ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander (FM 3-0).

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